

Amateurs in Action

Recounts of ham radio operators who have used their time and skills to help others in a time of need



Earthquake in Nepal

Just before noon local time on Saturday 25 April 2015, a magnitude 7.8 [earthquake struck Nepal](#), epicentered about 80 km to the northwest of the nation's capital Kathmandu. It was the largest earthquake in Nepal since 1934, and the deadliest day ever in Mount Everest history, killing 22 in a triggered avalanche. *Hundred of thousands of Nepalese were rendered homeless, with entire villages flattened.* Many centuries-old buildings, including some historically important sites, were damaged or destroyed.



Manju Sunar was living and working in France when she heard the news. Her daughter was back home in Nepal, and Manju wanted to know whether she was safe, but the cell sites, as well as power, were down in much of her daughter's part of the country. Having heard of the power of ham radio, Manju located the local amateur radio group where she was working, and they were able to contact a hobbyist-turned-survivalist in Nepal. After a search by motorbike, the report was relayed back that Manju's daughter was safe.



Laxmi Khanal on foot, coordinating victim searches by ham radio HT

In the town of Barpak, over the very epicenter of the quake, Ravindra Mul set up a transceiver and battery in a tent, then strung up a dipole in the trees above him. Once going, he was able to relay questions and information.



Satish Kharel relaying much-needed survivor and other incident information

In an impoverished nation like Nepal, most could not afford the equipment required to service a desperate population during such a large disaster, but it was all they had.

Very few were aware that well-known attorney Satish Kharel of Kathmandu also hobbyed on the side as an amateur radio operator for over two decades. His station allowed him to relay or answer anxious questions about conditions and numbers for families, survivors, and victims. When the power was cut, Satish ran out and connected his equipment to his car battery, and jumped right back on the air.

You can read more details of how ham radio operators helped during the Nepali earthquake in [Nepali Times](#) and in [Ars Technica](#).